

# **A GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE PLANNING PROCESS ALONG WITH COMMON TERMS**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Planning Department participates in nearly every phase of the development cycle, but its major functions are to enforce the local zoning code, ensure that property is properly developed in accordance with the subdivision regulations, and to maintain and implement the comprehensive plan. The development of private property is regulated to ensure the health, safety and welfare of **all** the citizens of Broken Arrow. Without some form of control over land development and use, undesirable situations may occur such as an auto salvage yard placed in the middle of a residential neighborhood, a home built on top of a buried pipeline, or a driveway placed too close to a dangerous street intersection. Planning is used to indicate preferred uses in different geographic areas of the community, and thus can provide a level of predictability to an area of the community or an individual piece of property. While planning may seem like an unnecessary burdensome process, it really serves to protect the interest of each citizen in the community.

Regulating the development of private property in Broken Arrow is coordinated through the Community Development Services Department, who then communicates with the Planning, Engineering, Public Works, Inspections, Fire, and City Attorney Departments. All development applications are processed through the Community Development Services Department. The Planning Department reviews applications for [zoning](#) changes, plats, Comprehensive Plan amendments, specific use permits, variances, site plans, [landscape plans](#), and [planned unit developments](#) (PUD's). Key to this review process is to ensure that land use decisions are in conformance with the policies and guidelines of the adopted [Comprehensive Plan](#). For each rezoning, [platting](#), or [site plan](#) request, staff prepares a report, which describes the purpose of the request, its conformance with the Broken Arrow Comprehensive Plan other codes and ordinances. The report is submitted to the [Planning Commission](#), for their review and action. The planning department may also at times, provide urban design, architectural, and landscape advice related to development proposals.

The Engineering Department reviews development plans to ensure that the infrastructure (e.g. streets, sanitary and storm sewers, water) serving the proposed meets adopted city standards and can accommodate the proposed development. The Inspections Department is responsible for issuing building permits and ensuring that structures are built to proper adopted building code standards. The Planning Department also tracks certain demographic statistics, such as total population, forecasted population, number of households, etc.

## **THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS**

Developing a piece of Property in Broken Arrow follows a sequence of steps. Depending upon where the subject property is located, how it is zoned, and how it conforms to the comprehensive plan, determines where an individual would start in the development process. All development applications are coordinated through Community Development Services Department.

## **ANNEXATION**

Annexation is the process of bringing property into another jurisdiction. The City of Broken Arrow regulates property and provides services (e.g. fire, police, water, sewer, etc.) within its City Limits. Broken Arrow has no jurisdictional authority over property outside its city limits. The City Council is the only and final authority, which considers annexations. Contact the City Attorneys office (918) 259-8422 if you would like to learn more about the annexation process and the Engineering Department (918) 259-8414 if you need to know whether your property falls within the Broken Arrow City Limits.

## **COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

A comprehensive plan is essentially a guide for development into the future. In 1995 the City Council appointed a steering committee to guide the development of the Comprehensive Plan. Over the subsequent 2 years the public was engaged in the process with 12 joint work sessions with the steering committee. Citizen's comments were invited at each work session and incorporated into the Plans ultimate development to ensure the plan was reflective of local issues, needs, and concerns. The comprehensive plan is document reflecting the vision for the community of Broken Arrow.

The City of Broken Arrow's Comprehensive Plan, "Creating the Best Community", adopted in September 1997 and amended in 2003, is an official document of the City of Broken Arrow. The policies, standards, and recommendations contained in the Comprehensive are used to guide growth and development of the community into the future. The Comprehensive Plan also identifies strategic investments and initiatives, and provides an important foundation for the development of a capital improvement plan for municipal investment in new or improved infrastructure services. The Comprehensive Plan includes a map called the Future Development Guide (FDG), which breaks the community up into different color-coded levels. The FDG contains a matrix that shows what zoning is allowed within each level. In this way citizens can at least have an idea of what may develop in the future on undeveloped property.

The comprehensive plan may be amended. For parcels 40-acres or smaller, the Planning Commission hears comprehensive plan amendment applications twice a year, once in September and once in March. If the tract is 40 acres or larger, the Planning Commission may hear the proposal at any of its regularly scheduled meetings.

With the completion of the Creek Turnpike (a.k.a. Broken Arrow South Loop), fenceline expansion, and other major developments (e.g. NSU Campus), the current comprehensive plan was updated in 2002-03. The City Council passed a resolution in March 2003 officially adopting the 2003 update to the comprehensive plan. Periodically, the Planning Department under the direction of the Planning Commission re-visits the Comprehensive Plan to make appropriate updates.

## **ZONING**

The Broken Arrow Zoning Ordinance is a law adopted by the City Council, which governs how land and buildings in the city may be used. When owners want to develop or use their property in ways that do not conform to their current zoning regulations, they must apply for a change to their zoning classification, also commonly referred to as a rezoning. Because zoning sets the "rules of the game" for

land and building use, the Ordinance is a statement of the City's official policy toward physical development and redevelopment. As municipal policy toward physical development and redevelopment changes over time, the Zoning Ordinance is amended to reflect these changes. Since zoning regulations have a significant impact on an individual property, anyone who occupies, uses, purchases, or leases property in the city should be familiar with the rules applicable to its use and to the use of other land in the vicinity. The zoning ordinance is enforced by the Planning and Code Enforcement Departments of the City.

Zoning is the main regulatory tool that implements the Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan attempts to group like uses together in zoning districts such as residential, commercial, office, etc. Within each district different intensities or densities can occur, such as residential lots being larger in an RE or R-1 district and smaller in an R-2 or R-3 district. Undeveloped property general is designated with a zoning classification of A-1 (Agriculture). Residential zoning is denoted with an R, commercial with a C, Office with and O, and Industrial with an I.

There are two parts to the Zoning Ordinance, the map and the text. Below is a description of each.

***Zoning Map*** divides the city into zoning districts. It shows district boundaries that have been described in legally precise terms when an area is zoned or rezoned.

***The Zoning Ordinance Text*** spells out the regulations for each class of district. Each regulation usually applies to all locations within a given district classification. Four principal types of regulations may be found in the text of the ordinance: allowed use, dimensional relationships, parking and other special regulations. The text also contains the procedures for enforcing and administering those regulations.

Use Regulations specify which types of land use (e.g. store, restaurant, warehouse, housing type) may occur within each zoning district. The Zoning Ordinance contains a Table of Use Regulations (Article IV of the Zoning Code) listing use types allowed in each zoning district. For each use type, in each class of district, the table specifies whether that use is allowed as-of-right, prohibited, or permitted as a specific use. Specific uses are only granted if a specific use permit is approved by the City Council. Typically specific uses are a churches, elderly care facilities, or schools (public or private).

When an individual seeks to rezone his property they submit an application, which is heard in an open public meeting held by the Planning Commission and City Council. These meetings gives interested and concerned parties a chance to hear the proposed use for the property. A zoning hearing focuses on the use of the property, the appropriateness for the location, and whether it generally conforms to the goals and concepts outlined in the comprehensive plan. Specific issues such as stormwater, utilities, house size, building materials, etc. are not the subject of discussion at a zoning hearing. These items are specifically and thoroughly addressed during other phases of the development cycle.

The Planning Commission hears all requests for rezoning within the incorporated areas of the City of Broken Arrow and forwards their recommendation to the City Council, where the item is again heard in an open public forum. If the Planning Commission denies a zoning application, the applicant may appeal the decision to the City Council.

At this time, zoning information is not available on the web page. To determine the zoning on your property call the Planning Department at (918) 584-8412. In the coming months we hope to provide this information on the web page.

## **PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT**

The purpose of the Planned Unit Development (PUD) is to allow the creation of a more desirable living environment through the application of flexible and diversified land development techniques. A PUD may consist of residential or commercial buildings clustered or designed with reduced setbacks, if amenities such as adequate open spaces and other design provisions are provided. The purpose of the PUD regulations is to encourage more creative and imaginative design of land development than is possible under traditional district zoning regulations. This flexibility often accrues in the form of relief from compliance with conventional zoning ordinance site and design requirements. Ideally, the result is a development that is better planned, contains more amenities, and ultimately a development that is more desirable to live in than one produced in accordance with typical zoning ordinance and subdivision controls.

Although a PUD can have residential lots smaller than what would be allowed in the zoning district, the overall density cannot exceed what would be allowed in the underlying zoning. For example, if the zoning on a piece of property allowed only 10 lots, the PUD cannot exceed this figure but would be allowed to reduce the size of the lots and concentrate them in a smaller area while the remaining area would be open space. In this way creeks, trees, ponds, and other natural features may be protected. A PUD can be either residential, commercial, or a combination of both.

## **PLATTING**

Platting is the process by which a tract of land is subdivided into lots and blocks and serves to provide a legal description of each piece of property created. The result of platting is a plat, which is essentially a map for a piece of property. Property within a plat can then be described for example as Lot 5, Block 10 of XYZ subdivision. Platting also serves to define the location of roads, utilities, driveway access points, rights-of-way, other types of easements, and stormwater detention areas if required. Plats can be one lot or many lots, depending upon the nature of the proposed development. All plats go to the Planning Commission and City Council for approval and either filed with a subdivision name in Tulsa or Wagoner County, depending upon the location of the property. Rezoning, PUD's, and Specific Use Permits normally require the development of a plat, unless the City Council waives the platting requirement.

## **SITE PLAN**

All development, other than single family and duplex homes, requires site plan approval by the Planning Commission. A site plan is a drawing that shows how the proposed structure(s) and other hardscape features will be placed on a parcel or lot, which is part of a filed plat. With only a few exceptions, a site plan may only be submitted for property that has been platted. Site plans are detailed plot plans showing all building structures, improvements, parking areas, setbacks, utilities, etc. The Planning Commission has final authority to approve site plans.

## **LANDSCAPE PLAN**

In June 1998 the City of Broken Arrow passed a landscape ordinance (Ordinance 2151), in an effort to beautify and enhance the livability of the community. This ordinance requires a landscape plan be submitted as part of the site plan process. The Planning Department reviews all landscape plans for compliance with the adopted ordinance.

## **PLANNING COMMISSION**

The Broken Arrow Planning Commission is a five-member body whose chief function is to hear all development proposals and anything relating to development of property in the City of Broken Arrow. The Planning Commission is also responsible for the Comprehensive Plan for Broken Arrow and revising the plan when necessary. The Planning Commission prepares the City's Master Plan, reviews all zoning, specific use permits, other development applications, and makes recommendations to the City Council. Planning Commission meetings are held on the second and fourth Thursdays of each month at 5:00 p.m. in the Council Chamber of City Hall, 220 South First Street.